

During National Lutheran Schools Week and throughout the year, I salute the Lutheran schools, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and congregations across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for allowing me to offer my comments congratulating Lutheran schools.

In his 1524 letter, "to the councilmen of all cities in Germany that they establish and maintain Christian schools," Martin Luther wrote, "My dear sirs, if we have to spend such large sums every year on guns, roads, bridges and dams, and countless items to ensure the temporal peace and prosperity of a city, why should not more be devoted to the poor neglected youth—at least enough to engage one or two competent men to teach school?"

Since this very humble request, the Lutheran Church's role in educating our young has flourished. There are currently 4,821 Lutheran schools operating in America, instructing over half a million students. These schools not only provide a traditional education, but also produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, and morals by providing an environment that encourages honesty, trust, respect, and responsibility.

In a world which faces such grave social, political, and economic choices as ours today, it is especially important to remember the words of Martin Luther and recognize the contribution that the Lutheran Church has made to education in our own Nation and around the world. I congratulate our Lutheran schools and I thank them for all that they have done for the spiritual and educational well-being of our youth.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 106.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ESTABLISHING AN ANNUAL VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION WEEK

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 54) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 54

Whereas visiting nurse associations (VNAs) are nonprofit home health agencies that, for over 120 years, have been united in their mis-

sion to provide cost-effective and compassionate home and community-based health care to individuals, regardless of the individuals' condition or ability to pay for services;

Whereas there are more than 500 visiting nurse associations, which employ more than 90,000 clinicians, provide health care to more than 4,000,000 people each year, and provide a critical safety net in communities by developing a network of community support services that enable individuals to live independently at home;

Whereas visiting nurse associations have historically served as primary public health care providers in their communities, and are today one of the largest providers of mass immunizations in the medicare program (delivering over 2,500,000 influenza immunizations annually);

Whereas visiting nurse associations are often the home health providers of last resort, serving the most chronic of conditions (such as congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, AIDS, and quadriplegia) and individuals with the least ability to pay for services (more than 50 percent of all medicare home health admissions are by visiting nurse associations);

Whereas any visiting nurse association budget surplus is reinvested in supporting the association's mission through services, including charity care, adult day care centers, wellness clinics, Meals-on-Wheels, and immunization programs;

Whereas visiting nurse associations and other nonprofit home health agencies care for the highest percentage of terminally ill and bedridden patients;

Whereas thousands of visiting nurse association volunteers across the Nation devote time serving as individual agency board members, raising funds, visiting patients in their homes, assisting in wellness clinics, and delivering meals to patients;

Whereas the establishment of an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week would increase public awareness of the charity-based missions of visiting nurse associations and of their ability to meet the needs of chronically ill and disabled individuals who prefer to live at home rather than in a nursing home, and would spotlight preventive health clinics, adult day care programs, and other customized wellness programs that meet local community need; and

Whereas the second week in May is an appropriate week to establish as National Visiting Nurse Association Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that there should be established an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 54, introduced by my distinguished col-

league, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), expresses the sense of the Congress that there should be established an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week.

Mr. Speaker, visiting nurses provide an invaluable medical service to countless people across our great country. For more than 120 years, these admirable citizens have helped to promote health and to prevent disease by providing skilled nursing care in the homes of millions of sick Americans each and every year. These caring nurses treat illnesses of all varieties, from the initial symptoms of the common cold and flu to the gravest stages of heart disease, of AIDS, and of cancer.

I would like to just give an example of one such person. Her name is Marcia Nowc, and she lives in my district, the Tenth Congressional District of Michigan; and she truly epitomizes the hard work and selflessness demonstrated by visiting nurses across our great country.

Her profession is nursing, and while she makes her living doing this, she also volunteers for an organization called Neighbors Caring for Neighbors Outreach Clinic. This clinic provides medical services, laboratory tests and x-rays to some of our most vulnerable families and individuals, often free of charge, thanks to the volunteer efforts of visiting nurses, like Mrs. Nowc. Nurse Nowc's volunteer activities are supported by 16 churches in Macomb County, Michigan; and oftentimes visiting nurses, just in their everyday work, truly demonstrate how faith-based initiatives can provide an essential support system within our communities.

Many of these visiting nurses literally work miracles every day because they give so generously of their time and of their spirit and because they recognize the dignity of every citizen and the possibilities of every life. Many times visiting nurses provide care to those that might be considered on the outer fringe. Perhaps they are underinsured; they may be the working poor or may even be homeless.

Visiting nurse associations are nonprofit home health agencies located throughout the United States that aim to enhance the quality of life of all through comprehensive home and community health services. Often, these organizations provide in-home services that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to Americans in need. It is truly worthwhile for this House to honor the compassion and the sense of obligation exhibited by visiting nurses for well over a century.

It is not an exaggeration to say that America's visiting nurses are some of our Nation's greatest treasures and greatest traditions. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 54.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1430

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) for all of the gentleman's excellent work on this legislation.

This is the kind of thing that kind of mystifies the American public sometimes, they do not understand that 80 percent of everything that we do, we agree. Most of the time they only focus on the 20 percent where we disagree. For the vast majority of issues, there is a consensus in terms of what our country should be doing and where we agree. Today I am proud, with these other great Members, to offer this resolution to establish an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week in honor of the army of health care heroes, who every day comfort, care for and assist our loved ones.

I appreciate the support and the dedication of the Visiting Nurse Associations. Every Member of Congress does, as does every American. Visiting Nurse Associations of today are founded on the principle that the sick, the disabled and the elderly benefit most from health care when it is offered in their own homes.

They are nonprofit home health agencies that provide cost-effective and compassionate home and community-based health care to individuals, regardless of their condition or ability to pay for services.

Through these exceptional organizations, 90,000 clinicians dedicate their lives to bringing health care into the homes of over 4 million Americans every year.

In the face of rising costs and drastic changes in our health care system, visiting nurse associations have continued to deliver high quality health services for over 120 years.

When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow read of the work of Florence Nightingale, he penned a poem, *Santa Filomena*, that spoke of the keep appreciation owed by all of us to those dedicated to service in the ultimate caring profession, the visiting nurse. He wrote of her as he could have written of every other visiting nurse. "Whene'er a noble deed is wrought, wh'e'ver is spoken a noble thought, our hearts, in glad surprise, to higher levels rise.

"The tidal wave of deeper souls into our inmost being rolls, and lifts us un-awares out of all meaner cares."

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to say my own thank you to our Visiting Nurse Associations. Through their work and their philosophy of nursing, they teach us every day about human kindness, the strength of human character, and the true definition of what it means to care. I thank them for their sharp minds, their watchful eyes, their

nerves of steel; and, of course, their hearts of gold.

In recognition of their hard work and dedication that visiting nurses bring to the nursing profession, and the comfort and quality care that they provide to patients, I ask Congress to please support this resolution to set aside one week each year to recognize and honor visiting nurses across the country. Democratic, Republican, liberal, conservative, each of us owes them an enduring debt.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) today on this resolution establishing a national Visiting Nurse Associations Week.

As we were growing up, doctors visited homes and nurses visited homes. Today it is seldom that a doctor visits a home unless it is a personal friend; but the visiting nurses just keep right on trucking.

Serving communities around the country for over 120 years, congressional recognizing and gratitude for these nonprofit health agencies is long overdue. The nearly 500 VNAs across the country collectively provide home and community-based services to over 4 million Americans each year. Founded in the 1890s, VNAs have continuously served as charitable providers in their local communities, creating a safety net for the poorest and most chronically ill and functionally disabled individuals. VNAs serve the majority of Medicaid home health beneficiaries and represent nearly one-half of all nonprofit home health agencies in the United States. On average, Medicare and Medicaid represent approximately 82 percent of VNAs' revenue, and this percentage is even greater in rural areas such as my rural congressional district.

Mr. Speaker, this fact is significant because rural America has always been shortchanged in the Medicare payment system. My rural providers are asked to provide the same level of care with less Federal dollars, even though wage rates have largely equalized between rural and urban areas due to the current workforce shortage. The Medicare home health reimbursement was slashed by 15 percent last October, and the 10 percent rural add-on is set to expire this April. Home health providers, including VNAs, are being crippled by these cuts and I will continue to fight as co-chairman of the Home Health Working Group to resist them. In the meantime, I am pleased to introduce this resolution with my colleague from Massachusetts to demonstrate our continued support for these under-recognized heroes.

In a country struggling with staggering health care costs, the Visiting

Nurse Association continually and successfully works to achieve its mission of cost-effective and compassionate home and community-based health care to individuals, regardless of the individuals' condition or ability to pay for those services. They are a leading provider of mass immunizations in the Medicare program and constitute over 50 percent of all Medicaid home health admissions. The association relies heavily upon volunteer nurses and reinvests any budget surplus into charity care, adult day care centers, wellness clinics, Meals-on-Wheels, and immunization programs.

This resolution will establish an annual National Visiting Nurse Associations Week in order to increase public awareness of the charity-based organization. They unquestionably deserve recognizing for their noble services; and by establishing this resolution, Congress would support the continuation of their mission.

I want to particularly mention, too, Ruth Ann Nerlich, who has been a part of VNA in Venango County as long as I have been aware. When I served in the State legislature, she was the go-to person State-wide. She was the person that best understood and best sold the message of home health care delivered by the VNA. And also Betsy Roberts of Elk County, who for decades has been a leader in providing home health care.

I want to conclude my comments with when the Balanced Budget Act was passed, there were problems in this country, mainly with for-profit home health care agencies which were really taking advantage of the system. Unfortunately, Congress, at that time, squeezed the system equally, and the Visiting Nurse Associations, scattered around much of this country, were not fat and wasteful. They raised millions of dollars to give free care to those who could not pay. They were made up of boards of local people, in health care and out of health care, who cared about and helped deliver the services that they provided.

So when the Balanced Budget Act cut them and squeezed them about 30 percent, it squeezed some of them out of business. Some of the VNAs in my district today, the only reason they stayed in business, they borrowed money to continue providing those services. They have debt to service today.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that this 15 percent cut is taken away, and it is vital that the 10 percent add-on that was proven was needed for home health care is continued on past April.

With that, I am proud to recognize these individuals and the invaluable contributions of our VNAs by cosponsoring this legislation, and urge the support of my colleagues.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the National Visiting Nurse Association of America, VNAA, is the official association for not-for-

profit, community-based home health organizations known as Visiting Nurse Associations. VNAs care for patients of all ages, from infants to the elderly, and offer comprehensive services that begin with maternal-child health programs and end with hospice care. VNAs provide a broad range of essential home health care and support services to patients in the security and comfort of their homes. These services include skilled nursing, rehabilitation, physical and occupational therapies, speech-language pathology, home medical equipment, and behavioral and mental health counseling, to name just a few.

Many VNAs provide homemaker services that help patients remain independent in their home while reducing the burden on family members. These services can include cooking, housekeeping, shopping, transportation, personal care, and a variety of other essential nonmedical services.

These services are critical at a time when the latest projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, published in the November 2001 Monthly Labor Review, estimated that more than 1 million new and replacement nurses will be needed by the year 2010. The U.S. Department of Labor projects a 21 percent increase in the need for nurses nationwide from 1998 to 2008, compared with a 14 percent increase for all other occupations.

Furthermore, according to a July 2001 report released by the General Accounting Office titled *Nursing Workforce: Emerging Nurse Shortages Due to Multiple Factors (GAO-01-944)*, "a serious shortages of nurses is expected in the future as demographic pressures influence both supply and demand. The future demand for nurses is expected to increase dramatically as the baby boomers reach their sixties, seventies and beyond."

As baby boomers age, the role of visiting nurses is more important, as patients spend less time in the hospital and demand the same quality of services at home. VNAs contribute to the well-being of the Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution as we pay special tribute to those who come into our homes, into our places of being, and bring not only their technical and professional services, but also bring the individuality of their care.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 54, expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week.

Our health care system is in a state of crisis. Our health care costs are rising exponentially, but it seems that these added expenses are not translating into rising access to quality compassionate care for the American people. Instead, it seems that too often, profits are driving our health care system—rather than the needs of the sick, our children, and the elderly.

Pharmaceutical companies are making record profits, while people in America are choosing between food and the prescription

drugs their doctors have prescribed. Reimbursements for Medicare and Medicaid treatments are so low that many health providers are turning away sick patients. Due to massive tax cuts for the wealthy, the Administration has not left adequate funds to help financially-strapped State and local governments to continue health care programs for the poor and underserved. For example, this has led to the recent closure in my District of two mental health clinics, that serve 1,400 adults and 240 children. Yes, this is a crisis.

But in the midst of that crisis, there are some shining examples of groups that truly seem to embody what health care can and should be. The Visiting Nurse Associations (VNAs) fall into that noble category. Visiting Nurse Associations are non-profit agencies that, for over 120 years, have been working toward their mission of providing cost-effective and compassionate health care to millions of individuals per year, regardless of their condition or ability to pay.

Nurses from VNAs go into communities and individual homes, providing primary care of all sorts, and prevention such as immunizations. Such care dramatically improves quality of life for seniors and the disabled who would prefer to live in their own homes, in their own neighborhoods, but need a bit of help from a visiting professional. Besides providing comfort and dignity to those in need, VNAs also save us millions of dollars in hospital and long-term care costs.

I am very pleased with the excellent work of the VNA of Houston. Their 50 nurses partner with social workers, physical therapists, home health aids, occupational therapists and speech therapists, in order to provide services to some 1,600 to 1,700 hundred patients per day in the area of Harris and the surrounding counties. This kind of care is the way of the future—helping people stay in the comfort of their homes, where they want to be.

I am sometimes frustrated when I ask members of the medical community, why they do not spend more time pushing prevention and education. They often reply that doctors don't have the time to talk to their patients for that long, or that a doctor's time is too expensive to spend on education. I am bothered by this, because as most people know, nurses and physician's assistants and auxiliary health professionals, are often much better communicators than their physician colleagues anyway. Expanding our utilization of nurses is a cost-effective way of improving American health.

The problem is that we have a nursing shortage. Our clinics and hospitals are being forced to squeeze too much out of the nursing staffs they have. The added workloads are driving many qualified nurses out of the field, and may be jeopardizing treatment for some patients. We need to find ways to recruit more nurses and to maintain the one we have.

For example, I have introduced HR 87, which would alter H-1C non-immigrant visa requirements, in order to make it easier to bring in qualified foreign nurses to fill in some of the gaps in our own nursing workforce. I would like to see some action on that bill soon.

Today's bill, H. Con. Res. 54, represents another way of improving our pool of nurses. By establishing an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week, not only will we be honoring an excellent and deserving group of health care professionals, but we will also be

raising awareness of the important role they serve in our communities. I hope that by focusing Congressional and public attention on Visiting Nurse Associations, we will inspire more bright young people to go into that noble profession.

I commend our nation's visiting nurses, and my colleague from Massachusetts for seeking to honor them. I support H. Con. Res. 54.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, our nation is facing a catastrophic nursing shortage. The average age of nurses in America is 43 years of age. Nurses are leaving the profession in droves, and fewer people are choosing to enter the profession. We have to do more to not only retain the nurses that we have but also to increase their numbers. We need to send the message that nursing is a rewarding and much needed profession. We need to do our best to make sure that nurses get the recognition that they deserve so that we can turn around the shortage. Nurses need to know that they are needed. I support H. Con. Res. 54 because it helps bring more recognition, not only to the individualized profession of visiting nurses, but also to the profession as a whole.

Visiting nurses deserve all of the recognition that can be afforded. They are a valuable group of professionals that travel to the homes of some of the sickest individuals to ensure that they are receiving much-needed health care in the comfort and privacy of their own home. By supporting Visiting Nurses Associations we are supporting a system of health care that is compassionate and that allows patients to receive care while maintaining their dignity. In my district, The Visiting Nurses Association of the Inland Counties works hard to bring care to patients all over the area. I know that they are working to obtain the necessary grant money to implement essential technology so that they could treat more patients while offering the individualized care that every patient deserves. I applaud the effort of the nurses and I applaud the Congress for bringing recognition to their noble work.

Mrs. TUBBS JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Housing Concurrent Resolution 54, honoring the Visiting Nurse Association.

In 1902, 13 young women met in Cleveland to form a local organization that would become one of the earliest pioneers of a new concept called community health nursing. From those women the Visiting Nurse Association of Cleveland was born.

These nurses understand that most people prefer the comfort and security of their home to recover and rehabilitate from an illness or injury. Making home health care an essential part of health care today. The Visiting Nurse Association touches the lives of nearly every American in some way.

While the size of the Visiting Nurse Association has grown tremendously, the quality of health care that they provide to people regardless of their ability to pay, continues to be superb. The organization serves over 15,000 people a year in Ohio. I would like to honor the visiting Nurse Association for the hard work and dedication they continue to provide to those in need.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 54, a bill expressing the sense of the Congress that we should establish an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the visiting nurse associations are nonprofit home health agencies that, for over 120 years, have been united in their mission to provide cost-effective and compassionate home and community-based health care to individuals, regardless of the individuals' condition or ability to pay for services. There are more than 500 visiting nurse associations, which employ more than 90,000 clinicians, provide health care to more than 4,000,000 people each year—with 95,000 visits in Florida alone—and provide a critical safety net in communities by developing a network of community support services that enable individuals to live independently at home.

In my home state, the Visiting Nurse Association of Florida serves 13 counties with a complete array of home health services. With headquarters in Stuart since 1976, VNA last year provided more than \$346,000 in charitable care to the most vulnerable in our communities.

The establishment of an annual National Visiting Nurse Association Week would increase public awareness of the charity-based missions of visiting nurse associations and of their ability to meet the needs of chronically ill and disabled individuals who prefer to live at home rather than in nursing homes, and would spotlight preventive health clinics, adult day care programs, and other customized wellness programs that meet local community needs. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me today in support of this important resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 54.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF FRED ROGERS AND HIS DEDICATION TO CREATING A MORE COMPASSIONATE WORLD

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 111) honoring the legacy of Fred Rogers and his dedication to creating a more compassionate, kind, and loving world for children and adults.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 111

Whereas on February 27, 2003, neighborhoods across the Nation were saddened by the death of Fred McFeely Rogers, creator and star of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood";

Whereas Mr. Rogers was born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in 1928, and moved to Pittsburgh in 1953, where he pursued his education at the University of Pittsburgh while attending Pittsburgh Theological Seminary;

Whereas in 1963, Mr. Rogers was ordained as a Presbyterian minister;

Whereas his landmark show "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" inspired, taught, and encouraged children, families, and adults since its first nationwide broadcast on February 19, 1968, with messages of love, peace, and comfort;

Whereas Mr. Rogers created over 200 of his own songs for his show, which always began in a comfortable family living room as he changed into his trademark cardigan sweater and sneakers, to encourage the healthy emotional growth of children and their families through imagination and friendship;

Whereas Mr. Rogers encouraged millions of children across the world to love themselves and their neighbors and to deal with complex emotional issues in a safe, reassuring way;

Whereas on July 9, 2002, in recognition of the contributions of Mr. Rogers, President George W. Bush presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom at a White House ceremony and said, "Fred Rogers has proven that television can soothe the soul and nurture the spirit and teach the very young";

Whereas the final show of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" aired in August 2001, after having completed 33 television seasons and nearly 1,000 episodes;

Whereas Mr. Rogers received many awards and honors for his efforts, including lifetime achievement awards from the Daytime Emmys and the Television Critics Association, designation as one of the "50 greatest TV stars of all time" by TV Guide, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1998, and induction into the Television Hall of Fame in 1999; and

Whereas Mr. Rogers always remained humble and true to his philosophy, saying "I have rarely never considered myself a TV star. . . . I always thought I was a neighbor who just came in for a visit": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors Fred Rogers for his legendary service to the improvement of the lives of children, his steadfast commitment to demonstrating the power of compassion, and his dedication to spreading kindness through example; and

(2) expresses condolences and sympathies to his wife Joanne, his two sons, and his two grandsons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to both mourn the loss of a great American, Mr. Fred Rogers, who died last week at the age of 74, and also to celebrate what he has done, what he has meant to so many Americans and people around the world, and remember his legacy with joy and hope, and look forward to the continued impact that he will have on the lives of so many.

Mr. Rogers was born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and he studied child development at the University of Pittsburgh. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister. His television pro-

gram, which debuted in 1964, continues on today, even though the last tape was taped in 2001 and aired last year or so. His program lives on, and I want to make a few comments about the man we all know as Mr. Rogers.

□ 1445

There is a magic that is Fred Rogers that really is not magical at all. He is not the creation of boardrooms or animators or high-tech special effects. He is who he is and nothing less. It is the transparency of being himself, with no pretense or facade, that enabled him to connect with millions around the world of all ages, of all walks of life.

When people think of Mr. Rogers, oftentimes the first thing that comes to mind is his television program of nearly 40 years for young children, though people of today know him well. We are recognizing him here in this Chamber not just for these generations of today, but so that future generations who read the RECORD in the years to come will be able to know about the moment, this moment in time and what we valued.

I had the pleasure of working at least a little bit with Fred Rogers in one area that was a shared passion of ours and that was quality early childhood education. He recognized that quality education makes an impact on the child's neurological development that lasts a lifetime. I might say when I had the time to sit down and meet with Fred, as anybody else would say the same thing, you sat in his office that had a piano, that had some soft furniture and a puppet or two, and you could not help within just a few moments of finding that you slowed down with your life, that he began to talk directly to you, and you felt things that perhaps you had forgotten in your own life of what was really important. He studied child development while he was studying for his degree as a Presbyterian minister and later worked regularly with Dr. Margaret McFarland, also an expert in child development. Their regular meetings was what created the programs that we now know.

Fred believed that childhood is not just a time you get through, because so many things happen during that time. He had tremendous respect for viewers, knowing that most were young children, all with their own needs but also knowing that he touched the child in all of us, seniors, adults, parents, those with disabilities, everyone.

When one watched his show, you watched him enter the room and you saw him change into his sweater and change his shoes and talk; you immediately entered the world, or rather through his simple magic with his show, he entered the world of children. He was childlike without being childish. He remained the adult, mature and wise, caring and comforting, safe and nurturing. Though his program earned awards that made him the envy of all in television, he was never an actor. He